

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LISBON 02366 01 OF 02 130705Z

21

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 SAM-01

ACDA-07 /068 W

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R 121626Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6726

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 LISBON 2366

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJ: ELECTIONS: MILITARY CHIEFS ATTACK PCP

REF: LISBON 2288 (DTG 081625Z APR 76)

BONN 06012 (DTG 081906Z APR 76)

SUMMARY: REPORTS BY GERMAN PERIODICAL OF HIGH LEVEL
PORTUGUESE MILITARY TIES TO SPINOLA HAVE RECEIVED HEADLINE
ATTENTION AND PROMPTED ARMY CHIEF EANES AND AIR FORCE
COMMANDER MORAIS DE SILVA TO DIRECT STRONGEST REMARKS
AGAINST COMMUNISTS SINCE NOV 25 ABORTIVE LEFTWING COUP.
END SUMMARY.

1. MILITARY REACT:

"STERN" REPORT THAT FORMER PRESIDENT SPINOLA WAS PLOTTING COUP

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PAGE 02 LISBON 02366 01 OF 02 130705Z

WITH KNOWLEDGE AND SUPPORT OF HIGH-RANKING PORTUGUESE MILITARY,

INCLUDING ARMY CHIEF EANES AND AIR FORCE CHIEF MORAIS DE SILVA BROUGHT STRONG REACTIONS FROM THESE OFFICERS APRIL 10 AND 11 (REFTELS):

-- EANES: EANES SAID THAT RUMORS OF SPINOLA'S RETURN HAD BEEN CIRCULATED FOR SOME TIME IN AN ATTEMPT TO CREATE A CLIMATE OF INSTABILITY AND TO POSTPONE ELECTIONS. IT FIRST APPEARED THAT ONLY EXTREME RIGHT COULD BE INTERESTED IN SUCH A DEVELOPMENT. CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THE "STERN" REPORT, HOWEVER--NOTABLY THE PRESENCE OF A "CERTAIN JOURNALIST" (ANTONIO DIAS LOURENCO, DIRECTOR OF PCP OFFICIAL JOURNAL "AVANTE") AT BONN PRESS CONFERENCE WHERE SPINOLA STORY WAS ANNOUNCED--INDICATED THAT "OTHER POLITICAL FORCES, NAMELY ONE POLITICAL PARTY, MIGHT ALSO BE INTERESTED IN CREATING PROBLEMS." EANES EXPRESS HOPE THAT THE PARTY, WHICH HE REFUSED TO IDENTIFY, WOULD HENCEFORTH CEASE USING METHODS WHICH WERE "REALLY DISAGREEABLE."

--MORAIS DE SILVA: THE OUTSPOKEN AIR FORCE CHIEF OF STAFF WAS MORE EXPLICIT. ACCORDING TO MORAIS DE SILVA, EITHER SPINOLA HAD GONE COMPLETELY CRAZY, WHICH HE DOUBTED, OR HE HAD BEEN SET UP BY FORCES TRYING TO CREATE A CLIMATE SIMILAR TO THAT PRECEDING THE ABORTIVE MARCH 1975 RIGHT WING COUP. ALSO INDIRECTLY REFERRING TO LOURENCO'S PRESENCE IN BONN. MORAIS DE SILVA EXPRESSED DOUBTS AS TO THE COMMUNISTS' BLAMELESSNESS IN THE AFFAIR.

--CUNHAL SPEAKS: IN AN APRIL 10 RALLY, PCP SEC GEN ALVARO CUNHAL TRIED TO PUT DISTANCE BETWEEN THE COMMUNISTS AND THE "STERN" REPORT. HE SAID THAT THE MAGAZINE'S ALLEGATIONS OF HIGH LEVEL PORTUGUESE MILITARY TIES TO SPINOLA WERE "CALUMNIOUS AND FALSE." LOURENCO'S COINCIDENTAL PRESENCE IN BONN WHEN THE REPORT APPEARED, HE ALLEGED, WAS BEING SEIZED UPON BY THE RIGHT TO OBFUSCATE THE SERIOUSNESS OF SPINOLA'S ACTIVITIES. THE MAIN QUESTION, HE SAID, WAS WHO APPROVES OF AND SUPPORTS TERRORIST PLOTS OR COUPS.

2. SOCIALIST RALLY: BETWEEN 50,000 AND 75,000 PERSONS TOOK PART APRIL 11 IN A DAY-LONG LISBON CELEBRATION PROMOTED BY THE PS TO STIMULATE ITS ELECTION CAMPAIGN. HIGHLIGHT OF THE DAY'S EVENTS WAS MAJOR RALLY ADDRESSED BY MARIO SOARES. SOARES REITERATED HIS PARTY'S COMMITMENT TO GO IT ALONE IN THE ELECTIONS, REJECTING ALLIANCES WITH EITHER THE PCP OR THE PARTIES TO THE PS'S RIGHT. HE AFFIRMED THAT ONLY THE PS COULD SUCCESSFULLY GOVERN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 LISBON 02366 01 OF 02 130705Z

PORTUGAL AFTER THE ELECTIONS AND HELD UP THE PS AS THE ONLY REALISTIC ALTERNATIVE TO A GOVERNMENT OF THE RIGHT. THE PARTIES TO THE RIGHT OF THE PS, SOARES SAID, WERE "MORE OR LESS INTERESTED IN RETURNING TO THE PAST." THE SOCIALISTS, WHO MADE A MAJOR EFFORT TO ENSURE A MASSIVE TOUNOUT FOR THEIR RALLY, HAD HOPED TO ATTRACT 200,000 PEOPLE.

3. INCIDENTS MAR PPD PENETRATION INTO BEJA: POPULAR DEMOCRATS

APRIL 11 HELD FIRST SIGNIFICANT RALLY IN BEJA, A DISTRICT WHERE PREVAILING LEFTIST SENTIMENTS HAD MADE IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR PPD TO CAMPAIGN LAST YEAR. EVEN WITH HEAVY SECURITY MEASURES MOUNTED BY LOCAL MILITARY AUTHORITIES, ATTENDANCE AT RALLY WAS LIGHT. FOLLOWING RALLY, SCUFFLES BETWEEN PPD ACTIVISTS AND LEFTIST COUNTER-DEMONSTRATORS RESULTED IN FOUR INJURIES, ONE SERIOUS.

4. CAP MEETS WITHOUT INCIDENT: A RALLY CALLED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PORTUGUESE CONFEDERATION OF FARMERS (CAP) DREW APPROXIMATELY 2,000 PERSONS APRIL 11 IN PORTALEGRE, 75 MILES NE OF LISBON. THE MEETING, WHICH WAS RESCHEDULED AFTER BEING DISRUPTED BY LEFTIST-LED AGRARIAN WORKERS ON APRIL 3, TOOK PLACE WITHOUT INCIDENT AFTER LOCAL MILITARY AUTHORITIES MOUNTED STRONG SECURITY MEASURES. CAP SPEAKERS REPEATED ATTACKS ON AGRARIAN MINISTER LOPES CARDOSO BUT STOPPED SHORT OF ISSUING ANY OF THE ULTIMATUMS WHICH HAD CHARACTERIZED PREVIOUS CAP MEETINGS.

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 01 LISBON 02366 02 OF 02 130704Z

21

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 LISBON 2366

5. LCI BARRED FROM MEDIA: THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL (RC) BARRED APRIL 10 THE MINUSCULE, TROTSKYITE INTERNATIONALIST COMMUNIST LEAGUE (LCI) FROM ACCESS TO OFFICIALLY PROVIDED RADIO AND TELEVISION FOR EIGHT DAYS. THE RC DECISION WAS BASED ON A LAW ALLOWING THEM TO CUT OFF A PRTY'S ACCESS TO THE MEDIA IF IT ABUSED THE PRIVILEGE IN ORDER TO DEFAME STATE INSTITUTIONS. THE LCI HAD BEEN HIGHLY CRITICAL OF THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL, AND ESPECIALLY OF THE SECOND AFM-PARTIES PACT.

6. DEPUTY TOTAL INCREASED: THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS DECIDED APRIL 10 TO INCREASE TO 263 THE NUMBER OF DEPUTIES TO BE ELECTED APRIL 25. THE NEW SEATS WILL BE DIVIDED AS FOLLOWS: LISBON - 3 NEW DEPUTIES; OPORTO - 2; AVEIRO, BRAGANCA, EVORA, SETUBAL, VIANA DO CASTELO, VILA REAL, AND VISEU - 1 EACH.

7. COMMENT: EANES AND MORAIS DE SILVA'S COMMENTS ON THE CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 LISBON 02366 02 OF 02 130704Z

"STERN" ARTICLE ARE THE STRONGEST WORDS DIRECTED PUBLICLY AGAINST THE PCP BY MAJOR MILITARY FIGURES SINCE THE NOV 25 ABORTIVE LEFT WING COUP. CUNHAL'S BACK-TRACKING, AFTER PCP-CONTROLLED PRESS MADE MAJOR EFFORT TO EXPLOIT ISSUE, INDICATES HE FULLY APPRECIATES THE SERIOUSNESS OF INCURRING THE MILITARY'S WRATH. SIGNIFICANTLY, NONE OF THE COMMUNIST PRESS HAS REPEATED "STERN'S" ALLEGATIONS OF HIGH LEVEL MILITARY TIES TO SPINOLA.
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